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EFFECTS OF PROTON IRRADIATION AND TEMPERATURE ON 1Ω-CM AND 10Ω-CM SILICON SOLAR CELLS

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C. Nicoletta

January 1973

GODDARD SPACE FLIGHT CENTER Greenbelt, Maryland

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C. Nicoletta

ABSTRACT

 1Ω -cm and 10Ω -cm Silicon Solar cells, manufactured by AEG-Telefunken, were exposed to 1.0 Mev protons at a fixed flux of 10^9 P/cm²-sec and fluences of 10^{10} , 10^{11} , 10^{12} and 3.10^{12} P/cm². I-V curves of the cells were made at room temperature, -65°C and +165°C after each irradiation. A value of 139.5 m w/cm² was taken as AMO incident energy rate per unit area. Degradation occurred for both uncovered 1Ω -cm and 10Ω -cm cells. Efficiencies are generally higher than those of comparable U.S. cells tested earlier. Damage (loss in maximum power efficiency) with proton fluence is somewhat higher for 10Ω -cm cells, measured at the three temperatures, for fluences above 2.10^{11} P/cm². Cell efficiency, as expected, changes drastically with temperature.

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EFFECTS OF PROTON IRRADIATION AND TEMPERATURE ON 1Ω-cm AND 10Ω-cm SILICON SOLAR CELLS

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

 1Ω -cm and 10Ω -cm solar cells, manufactured by AEG-Telefunken of West Germany for use on the Helios satellite, have recently been exposed to 1.0 Mev proton radiation. Past data indicates maximum degradation of cell efficiency for unshielded solar cells at roughly (1.0-1.5) Mev (Ref. 1). Fluence levels have been selected to coincide with those used in earlier radiation experiments on U.S. manufactured cells (Refs. 2 and 3). Fluences of 10^{10} , 10^{11} , 10^{12} and 3.10^{12} P/cm² were attained in each experiment at a flux of 10^9 P/cm²-sec.

The cells were irradiated at room temperature and I-V characteristics measured at that temperature and at the two extremes likely to be found in the mission, -65°C and +165°C.

The cells are then compared as to their efficiencies, taken from the I-V curves.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Low energy proton (E < 2.0 Mev) irradiation of uncovered silicon solar cells affects the junction properties of silicon enough to produce large power losses (Ref. 2). The penetration of 1.0 Mev protons in silicon is a function of energy only and is shown in Figure 1. This curve has been obtained from Linnenbom's data (Ref. 4) for aluminum, using the equation,

$$\frac{R_{Si}}{R_{A1}} = \frac{\left(\frac{dE}{dr}\right)_{A1}}{\left(\frac{dE}{dr}\right)_{Si}}$$
(1)

the R's are the ranges and the (d E/dr)'s the stopping powers. The relative mass stopping power of Al to Si is 0.97. From Figure 1, 1.0 Mev protons can be seen to penetrate about $16\,\mu$ into silicon. This value is well below the p-n junction, which is generally about .25-.50 micron below the surface. Larger proton fluences cause increased defects to be produced in the semiconductor, thereby creating more trapping sites and decreasing efficiency of the cell overall. From the expression for diffusion length of minority carriers, L = $(D\tau)^{\frac{1}{2}}$, where D is

the diffusion constant and τ the carrier lifetime, as the lifetime decreases due to increased trapping sites, so does the diffusion length. This directly affects the short circuit current, measured in the experiments, through the expression,

$$I_{SC} = Aq(L_e + L_h)G$$
 (2)

where A is the exposed cell area, q the electron charge, $L_{\rm e}$ and $L_{\rm h}$ the diffusion lengths of electrons and holes respectively, and G the rate of production of (e - h) pairs. Looking at the results in the text, Figures 4-15, before irradiation and after a fluence of $3.10^{12}~{\rm P/cm^2}$, one observes the degradation of short circuit current.

The current-voltage characteristic of the p-n junction is denoted by the diode equation,

$$I = I_0 \left(\frac{qV}{e^{kT}} - 1 \right)$$
 (3)

where I is the injection current flowing through the junction under a forward bias voltage, V. k is Boltzman's Constant and T is the absolute temperature. I_0 is the saturation current due to free carriers which overcome the junction barrier potential, and is exponentially temperature dependent. In the laboratory measurements of the I-V curves, where a finite load is used, the net current through the load is the difference between the short circuit current and injection current,

$$I_{\text{net}} = I_{\text{sc}} - I_0 \left(e^{\frac{qV}{kT}} - 1 \right)$$
 (4)

When $I_{net} = 0$, we get the open circuit voltage, V_{oc} ,

$$V_{oc} = \frac{kT}{q} \ln \left(\frac{I_{sc}}{I_0} + 1 \right)$$
 (5)

Since our primary concern is with maximum power output and cell efficiency, we would like an expression which relates the three observed values of current, voltage and temperature.

By definition, power output P(V) is,

$$P(V) = VI_{net} = VI_{sc} - VI_{0} \left(e^{\frac{qV}{kT}} - 1\right)$$
 (6)

Maximum power occurs at $\partial P/\partial V = 0$, therefore from Equation (6) we get,

$$I_{sc} = \left(V_{mp} \frac{q}{kT} + 1\right) I_0 \frac{qV_{mp}}{e^{kT}} - I_0$$
 (7)

where V_{mp} is the voltage at maximum power. The net current at maximum power is

$$I_{mp} = I_{sc} - I_0 \left(e^{\frac{qV_{mp}}{kT}} - 1 \right)$$
 (8)

Substituting Equation (7) into Equation (8), we get

$$I_{mp} = I_0 \frac{q}{kT} V_{mp} e^{\frac{qV_{mp}}{kT}}$$
 (9)

From the definition of maximum power, $\boldsymbol{V}_{mp}\ \boldsymbol{I}_{mp},$ we have

$$P_{mp} = I_0 \frac{q}{kT} V_{mp}^2 e^{\frac{qV_{mp}}{kT}}$$
 (10)

Elimination of the exponential term in (10) gives

$$P_{mp} = \frac{I_{sc} \frac{q}{kT} V_{mp}^{2}}{\left(1 + \frac{q}{kT} V_{mp}\right)} \left(1 + \frac{I_{0}}{I_{sc}}\right)$$
 (11)

Solar cell efficiency, η , is maximum power output/power input

$$\eta = \frac{I_{sc} \frac{q}{kT} V_{mp}^{2} \left(1 + \frac{I_{0}}{I_{sc}}\right)}{\left(1 + \frac{q}{kT} V_{mp}\right) A (AMO S.C.)}$$
(12)

(see Ref. 5), where (AMO S.C.) is the air mass zero solar constant. The efficiency represents the single most important quantity representing the solar cell's function in power conversion. In our case, due to low energy (< 2 Mev) proton irradiation, it has more significance in describing damage to the cell than damage coefficients, since the 1.0 Mev protons do not pass through the cell. One cannot directly therefore relate the damage coefficient to diffusion lengths.

From Expression (12) we can see that the efficiency decreases with increasing temperature. Greater fluences account for decreases in minority carrier lifetimes, thereby decreasing the short circuit current.

EXPERIMENTAL TECHNIQUE

Four (2×2) cm cells are irradiated simultaneously in a turbo-molecular pumped vacuum chamber. The vacuum was approximately 10^{-6} torr throughout the irradiations and measurements. Figure 2 is an illustration of the experimental set-up. Each solar cell had four leads; two on the buss bar and two on the Ti (Pd) Ag layer on the back of the cell, to reduce resistance loss.

The proton beam was supplied by a Van de Graaff accelerator with energy stability of $\pm 1.0\%$. The proton beam flux was measured over the sample positions by five Faraday cups. One cup was centered over each sample in the experiment, (4 samples) and the fifth was centrally located. Variation in the proton flux was found to be about 50% over the four samples. The samples were fastened to a copper sample holder, using silver epoxy, in all experiments except the first one. In the first experiment the samples were spring loaded to the sample holder, but due to contact problems (see Ref. 6), the silver epoxy cement was subsequently used to achieve good contact.

The sample temperatures were maintained by circulating gaseous nitrogen for the low temperatures, and using electric ceramic heaters for the high temperatures. A copper-constantan thermocouple on the copper substrate monitored substrate temperature and is the value assumed for cell temperatures. Due to nitrogen circulation problems, it was difficult to maintain a constant -65°C for all measurements.

A Spectrolab X-25 solar simulator with a 3000 watt filtered Xe lamp was used in making the I-V measurements. A value of 139.5 m w/cm² was maintained as AMO during all measurements. The variation of the light beam over the samples was determined by moving the turning mirror (Figure 2) to strike one sample at different positions. The variation was found to be $\pm 2.0\%$. A Spectrolab D550 electronic load coupled to an x-y plotter provided the I-V curves on metric paper. The temperature of the four cells was brought from room temperature to -65°C then up to +165°C after each proton fluence was reached. The proton flux was maintained within experimental limitations at 10^9 P/cm²-sec.

Five experiments were performed in all. Each consisted of three uncovered solar cells and one covered cell. Four levels of fluence were reached in each experiment; 10^{10} , 10^{11} , 10^{12} and 3.10^{12} P/cm². The three uncovered cells in each experiment consisted of:

```
three 1\Omega-cm cells (300\mu thick), experiment 1; three 10\Omega-cm cells (300\mu thick), experiment 2; three 10\Omega-cm cells (200\mu), experiment 3; three 1\Omega-cm cells 50% covered, experiment 4; three 10\Omega-cm cells 50% covered, experiment 5.
```

The covered solar cell is shielded by about 150μ of fused silica, thereby preventing the protons from reaching the cell surface. Figure 3 is a plot of proton penetration in fused silica taken from Linnenbom (Ref. 4). In effect then, the covered cells were measured at the three different temperatures, but shielded from the incident radiation by the cover slides.

I-V measurements were started immediately after irradiation to minimize any annealing effects.

RESULTS

Characteristic I-V curves giving cell power output in watts were generated for each measurement. Figures 4-15 show typical I-V curves for the five experiments, before irradiation and after 3.10^{12} P/cm². The I-V curves for intermediate fluences are omitted in this report. The I-V curves of the covered solar cells 81-13, Figures 4 and 5, show the results during Experiment 1, which are typical of the results for that cell during the other experiments. No radiation damage is noted.

At room temperature, before irradiation, most of the cells show the same efficiency to within 0.6% for each experiment.

Tables 1-5 give the values of the open circuit voltage and short circuit current with proton fluence and temperature. Note the short circuit current decreases little until after a fluence $> 10^{10} \, \text{Protons/cm}^2$. The defects introduced by the irradiation are now more significantly affecting the diffusion lengths. This is shown in the plot of diffusion length with fluence for 4.6 Mev protons (Ref. 3). To consider damage coefficients here would be misleading, as discussed earlier, due to the short penetration of 1.0 Mev protons.

Of prime importance in rating a cell is efficiency, the expression for which is given in Equation (12). For the input power we use 139.5 mw/cm² supplied by our Solar Simulator. Typical variations in per cent efficiencies with fluence, at three temperatures, are given in Figures 16 thru 21. The efficiencies of the covered cells change very little with fluence, see Figure 16. As predicted by Equation (12), the efficiency is greater for lower temperatures.

The per cent damage versus fluence is given in Figure 22. The results are compared with those in Statler's paper (Ref. 1), which were taken from earlier work.

The ratio of $P_{\text{max}}/P_{\text{max}_0}$, maximum power output to maximum power output before irradiation, versus proton energies, with fluences as parameters, is reported in Statler's work. Those results are at room temperature. The approximate results from his paper and our data are compared in Table 6.

The above values are maximum power ratios due to 1.0 Mev protons at room temperature irradiation. The AEG-Telefunken cells exhibit less radiation damage than the previously tested American cells.

Existing published temperature data, other than room temperature, following proton irradiation is scarce, but our results give what we believe to be significant data at the two temperature (-65°C and +165°C) values.

The 1Ω -cm covered cell in each experiment was measured at the three temperatures of 25°C, -65°C and +165°C but was not exposed to radiation. Figure 23 compares the efficiencies, of this cell to a similar uncovered one irradiated to $3 \times 10^{12} \text{ P/cm}^2$, at different temperatures. The difference between the curves would be due to radiation damage. The efficiencies of the covered AEG cells are higher than those of U.S. cells studied at Ames at 28°C and 200°C (Ref. 7).

CONCLUSIONS

- (1) The solar cells examined in any particular experiment appear fairly uniform as regards their I-V curves, before irradiation, at room temperature.
- (2) 10Ω -cm cells exhibit somewhat greater damage than 1Ω -cm cells, due to proton fluence.
 - In Cherry and Slifer's work in 1963 (Ref. 8) with 4.6 Mev protons, they found 10Ω -cm cells to be more radiation resistant than 1Ω -cm cells. Use of tungsten light source in obtaining their I-V curves provides a long wavelength response, where the 1Ω -cm cells exhibited greater degradation than the 10Ω -cm cells. Our results, using a Xenon light source, show a response in the short wavelength region and here we found 10Ω -cm to exhibit slightly greater damage.
- (3) The amount of damage with proton fluence appears greater for cells measured at +165°C than for those measured at +25°C and -65°C.
- (4) The solar cells examined at room temperature degrade to a lesser extent than the 1Ω -cm and 10Ω -cm cells reported on in Statler's work.
- (5) The 50% covered 1Ω -cm and 10Ω -cm cells exhibit less degradation with proton fluence than the uncovered cells, except for the 50% covered 10Ω -cm cell at +165°C. This higher rate may be attributed to a contact problem.
- (6) From Figure 22, we note that for both uncovered 1Ω -cm and 10Ω -cm cells measured at 25°C and -65°C, the percent damage varies no more than about 7% for these cells at any particular fluence.
- (7) The difference in efficiency between an irradiated and unirradiated cell diminishes as the temperature at which the I-V curves are run increases. See Figure 23.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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	80-11	86-2
fluence P/cm ²	$\begin{array}{cccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccc$	$\begin{array}{cccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccc$
0	590 137 25 775 129 -67 300 147 165	595 134 25 770 128 -62 300 146 164
1010	570 128 24 765 115 -66 275 146 163	570 128 24 765 119 -67 280 146 163
1011	550 113 27 745 98 -65 255 139 164	555 119 25 750 107 -62 260 140 165
1012	520 98 27 715 80 -63 240 129 161	505 101 26 715 88 -62 215 123 163
3.1012	495 84 26 710 67 -63 195 110 165	495 95 27 730 80 -67 190 112 165
	86-3	81-13 (6 mil)
fluence P/cm ²	$\begin{array}{cccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccc$	V _{oc} I _{sc} T V _{oc} I _{sc} T V _{oc} I _{sc} T mv ma °C mv ma °C
0	590 136 25 775 130 -66 300 149 165	595 140 25 780 126 -69 310 150 162
10 ¹⁰	570 130 24 765 118 -68 275 148 164	590 140 25 775 128 -64 300 147 164
1011	545 115 27 735 102 -60 255 140 165	600 138 25 775 129 -65 295 148 164
1012	500 92 26 695 76 -62 195 117 166	590 138 26 310 150 161
3.10 ¹²	475 85 27 715 69 -67 175 105 165	595 138 25 770 126 -63 300 146 164

Table 1

Table 2 Experiment 2 — 10Ω -cm

	151-9	151-13
fluence P/cm ²	$\begin{array}{cccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccc$	V _{oc} I _{sc} T V _{oc} I _{sc} T V _{oc} I _{sc} T mv ma °C mv ma °C
0	550 143 25 645 137 -67 225 148 164	555 138 25 650 132 -65 225 143 165
10 ¹⁰	530 143 26 635 134 -62 215 150 165	545 139 26 630 132 -64 225 143 165
1011	490 116 26 635 110 -63 180 133 166	515 127 26 640 120 -63 200 138 165
1012	410 102 25 630 90 -64 140 107 165	480 108 25 630 98 -63 160 116 165
3.10 12	470 95 26 630 83 -63 130 90 165	480 102 26 635 89 -63 140 104 164
	151-15	81-13 (6 mil)
fluence P/cm ²	$\begin{array}{cccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccc$	V _{oc} I _{sc} T V _{oc} I _{sc} T V _{oc} I _{sc} T mv ma °C mv ma °C mv ma °C
0	545 138 26 645 131 -66 225 142 165	595 137 26 775 123 -63 300 147 165
1010	530 138 26 615 130 -61 215 140 165	595 138 25 750 126 -64 300 147 165
10 1 1	495 127 26 615 121 -62 200 136 165	595 139 26 750 129 -62 305 147 165
10 12	450 108 26 585 93 -63 160 123 165	595 138 26 750 129 -62 300 146 165
3.1012	415 87 26 555 73 -63 120 100 164	595 138 26 755 127 -64 300 150 165

Table 3 Experiment 3 - 10Ω -cm (200 μ)

	150-7	150-8
fluence P/cm ²	$\begin{array}{cccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccc$	$ \begin{array}{cccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccc$
0	525 131 26 610 129 -61 205 132 164	525 129 26 600 126 -61 205 130 164
10 ¹⁰	525 131 26 615 124 -62 200 133 165	520 128 26 605 119 -64 195 131 166
1011	500 123 27 610 110 -57 185 130 165	500 123 26 605 109 -57 190 129 165
10 ¹²	480 102 24 615 94 -65 150 113 164	450 88 24 590 79 -64 125 102 164
3.10^{12}	490 98 22 600 85 -42 120 98 165	450 81 22 560 68 -42 95 80 165
	150-13	81-13 (6 mil)
fluence P/cm ²	$\begin{array}{cccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccc$	V _{oc} I _{sc} T V _{oc} I _{sc} T V _{oc} I _{sc} T mv ma °C mv ma °C
0	525 132 26 605 130 -61 205 133 164	595 137 25 755 129 -62 305 147 164
10 ¹⁰	525 130 25 605 123 -61 190 134 164	590 139 26 755 127 -64 300 148 165
10 ¹¹	490 115 27 605 101 -57 170 128 165	590 138 25 740 127 -57 305 147 163
10 ¹²	470 96 24 605 88 -62 130 106 164	585 138 25 750 126 -64 300 147 165
3.10 ¹²	470 86 21 590 76 -42 105 85 165	585 138 22 750 128 -43 300 148 165

					81-2	2								81-1	L			
fluence P/cm ²	V _{o c} mv	I _{sc} ma	T °C	V _{oc} mv	I _{sc} ma	T °C	V _{oc} mv	I _{sc} ma	T °C	V _{oc} mv	I _{s c} ma	T °C	V _{oc} mv	I _{s c} ma	T °C	V _{oc}	I _{sc} ma	T °C
0	600	140	23	765	125	-65	300	146	164	590	140	23	745	128	-65	300	145	164
1010	580	132	25	765	115	-68	290	147	165	585	136	25	760	121	-68	300	145	164
1011	590	126	25	760	113	-65	280	142	165	585	129	25	755	117	-65	280	144	165
1012	540	111	26	750	93	-66	240	130	164	545	117	26	750	100	-66	250	134	165
3.1012	525	105	25	740	89	-65	220	123	165	540	112	25	740	97	-65	230	128	165
					81-3	3					·		81-	13 (6	mil)			<u>.</u>
fluence P/cm ²	V _{oc} mv	I _{sc} ma	T °C	V _{oc} mv	Isc	T °C	V _{oc}	I _{sc} ma	T °C	V _{oc} mv	I _{sc} ma	T °C	V _{oc} mv	•	mil) T °C	V _{oc}	I _{sc} ma	T °C
_	mv		°C	mv	Isc	T °C	mv		°C	mv		°C	V _{oc} mv	I _{sc}	T °C	mv		°C
P/cm ²	600	ma	°C 23	760	I _{sc} ma	Т °С	300	ma	°C	mv 590	ma	°C	V _{oc} mv	I _{s c} ma	T °C	mv 305	ma	°C 165
P/cm ²	mv 600 595	ma 143	°C 23 25	760 770	I _{sc} ma	T °C -63 -66	300 300	ma 150	°C 164 165	590 580	ma 139	°C 23 25	V _{o c} mv 765	I _{s c} ma	T °C -65 -64	305 305	ma 147	°C 165 165
0 10 ¹⁰	600 595 595	ma 143 140	°C 23 25 25	760 770 760	I _{sc} ma 132 125	T °C -63 -66 -65	300 300 285	ma 150 150	°C 164 165 165	590 580 585	ma 139 139	°C 23 25 25	V _{oc} mv 765 745 735	I _{s c} ma 129 127	T °C -65 -64 -64	305 305 305	ma 147 149	°C 165 165 165

Table 5 Experiment 5 — 10Ω -cm 50% Covered

	151-1	151-2
fluence P/cm ²	$egin{array}{cccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccc$	$\begin{array}{cccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccc$
0	550 134 25 640 127 -66 225 140 165	550 135 23 640 129 -65 220 140 165
1010	554 133 24 640 127 -65 225 139 166	550 132 24 640 126 -65 220 140 163
1011	553 128 25 640 113 -63 200 133 165	540 130 25 640 118 -63 200 133 162
1012	500 111 25 640 100 -62 165 115 163	500 115 24 640 105 -64 115 115 163
3.1012	495 109 25 635 96 -64 160 108 163	500 112 25 630 100 -63 113 107 164
		81-13 (6 mil)
fluence P/cm ²	V _{oc} I _{sc} T V _{oc} I _{sc} T V _{oc} I _{sc} T mv ma °C mv ma °C	V _{oc} I _{sc} T V _{oc} I _{sc} T V _{oc} I _{sc} T mv ma °C mv ma °C mv ma °C
0		595 138 24 778 125 -66 305 149 163
1010	No Cell Tested	590 139 25 760 128 -63 302 148 164
1011		594 140 25 776 129 -65 300 147 165
1012		595 138 25 760 128 -63 295 147 165
3.1012		595 137 25 765 127 -64 300 148 164

Table 6

Comparison of Relative Power Output from Data in Statler's Paper with that from GSFC

·	$\begin{array}{c c} 1\Omega\text{-}\mathbf{cm} \\ \mathbf{10^{11}} \ \mathrm{P/cm^2} \end{array}$	1Ω -cm 3.10^{11} P/cm^2	10Ω -cm 10^{11} P/cm^2	$\frac{10\Omega - cm}{3.10^{11} \text{ P/cm}^2}$
Statler's Paper	0.65	0.53	0.68	_
GSFC Results	0.76	0.66	0.70	0.67

14

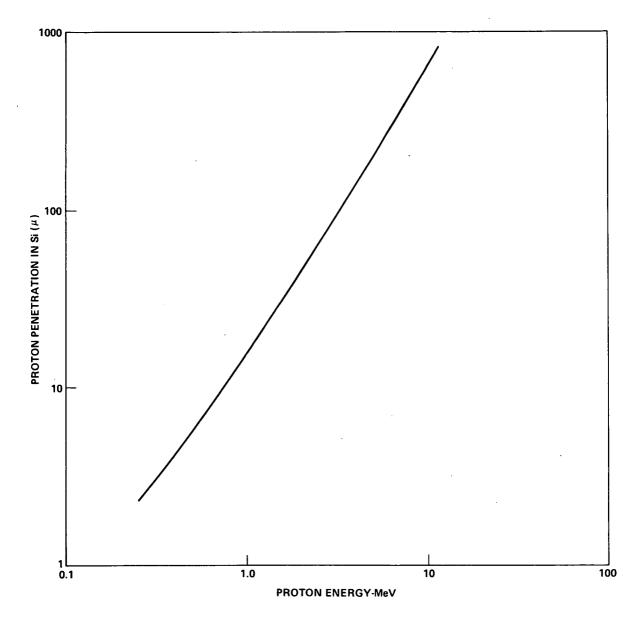
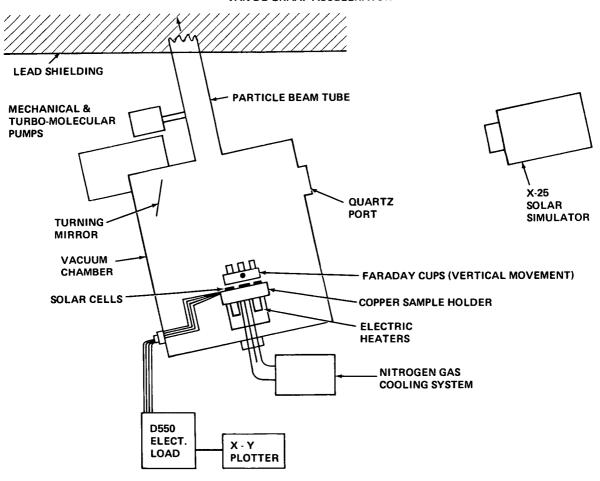


Figure 1

VAN DE GRAAF ACCELERATOR



EXPERIMENTAL SET-UP

Figure 2

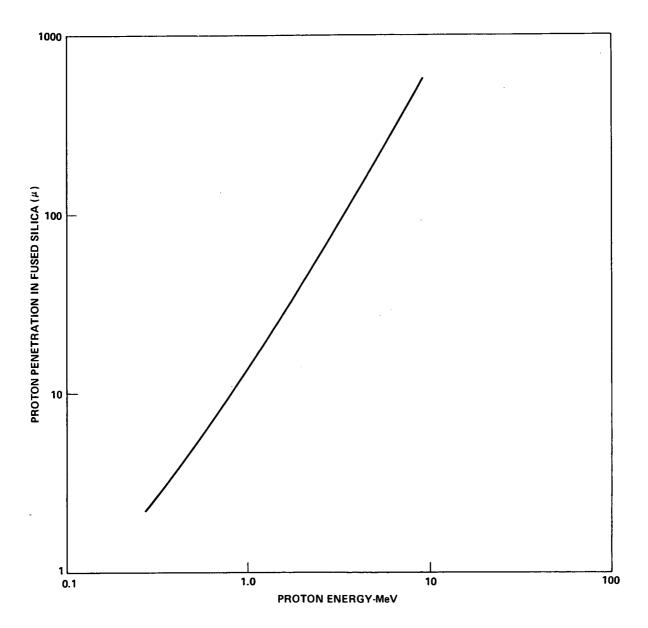


Figure 3

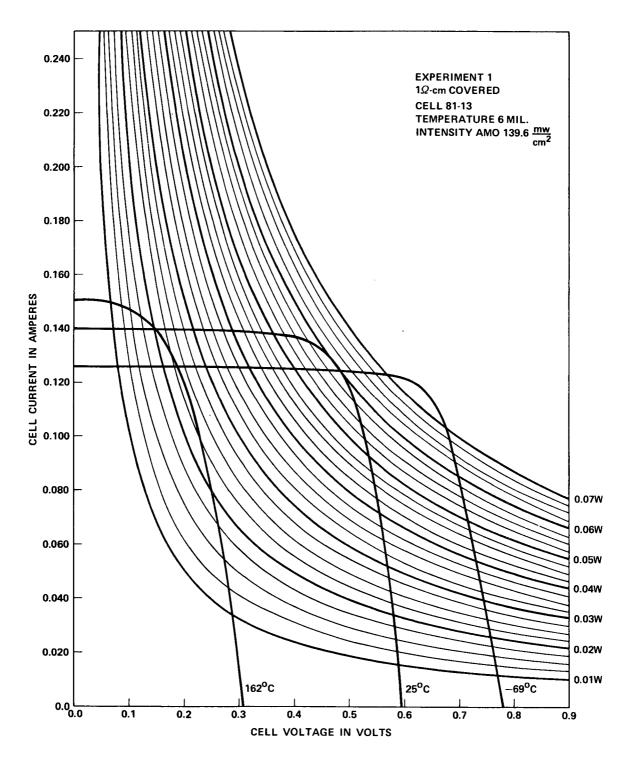


Figure 4

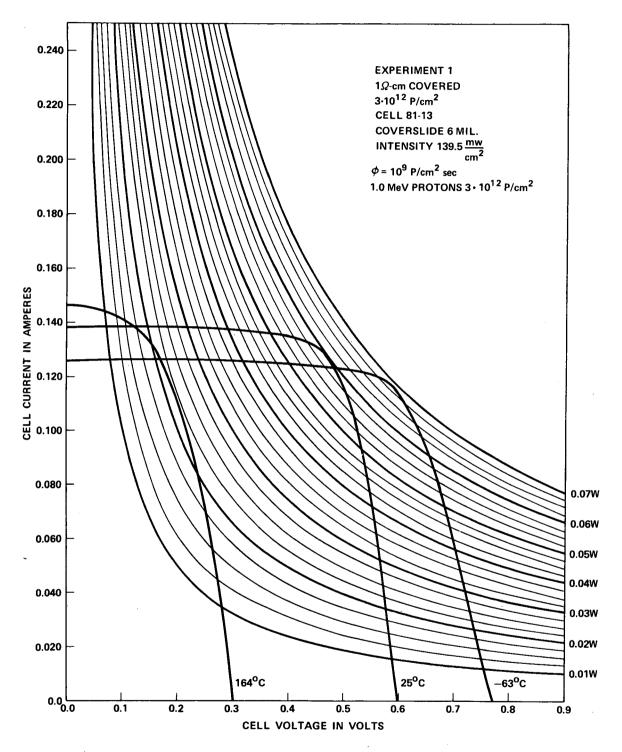


Figure 5

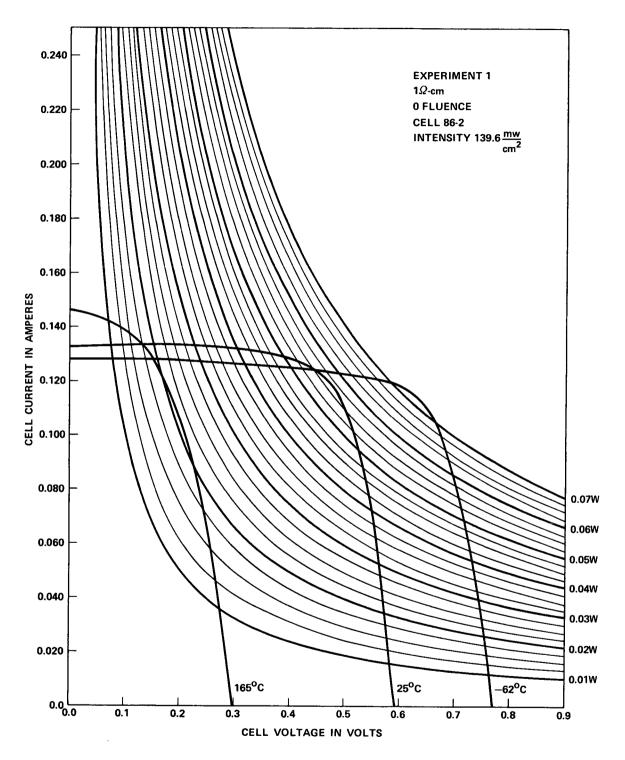


Figure 6

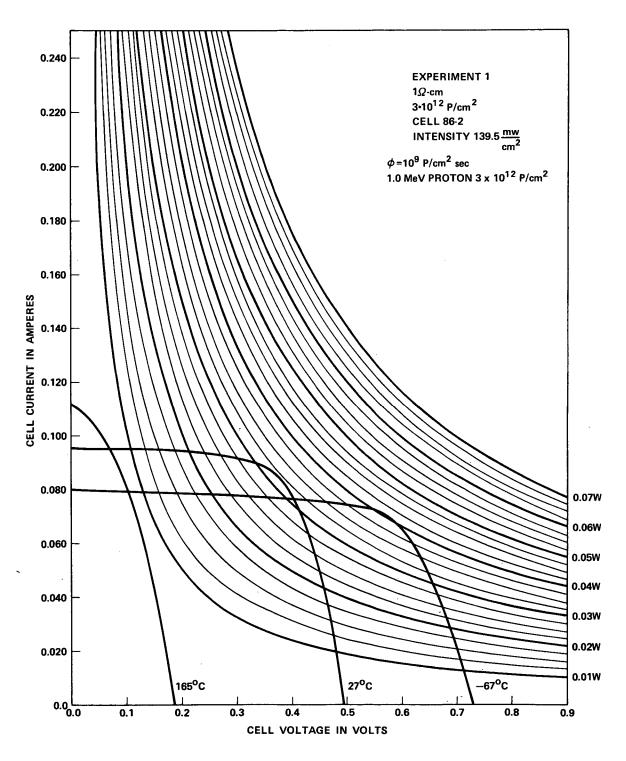


Figure 7

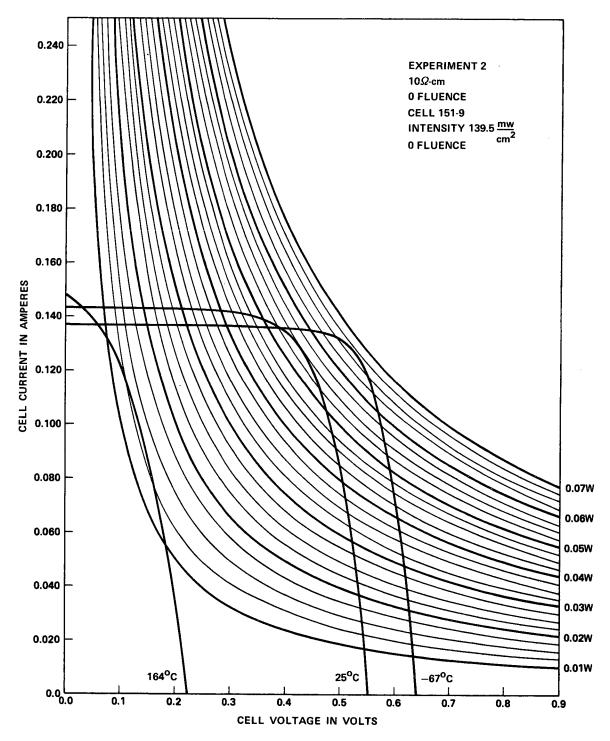


Figure 8

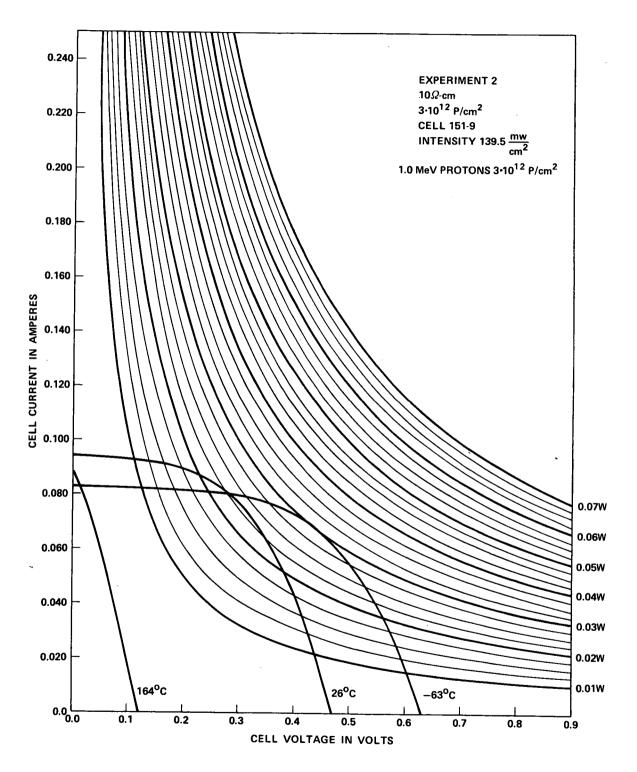


Figure 9

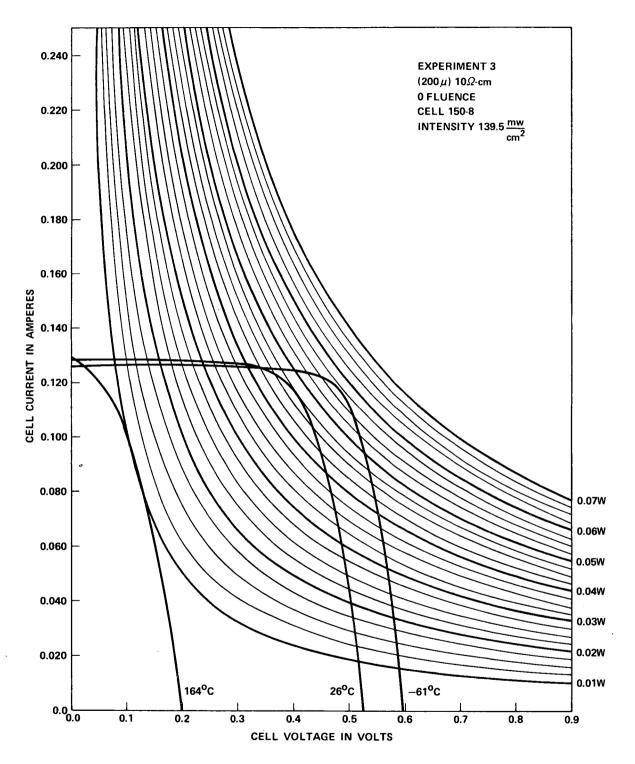


Figure 10

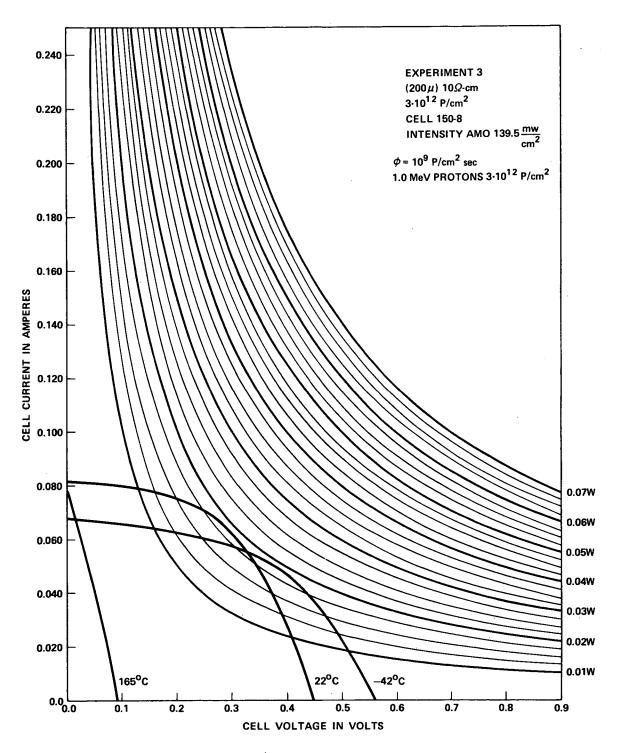


Figure 11

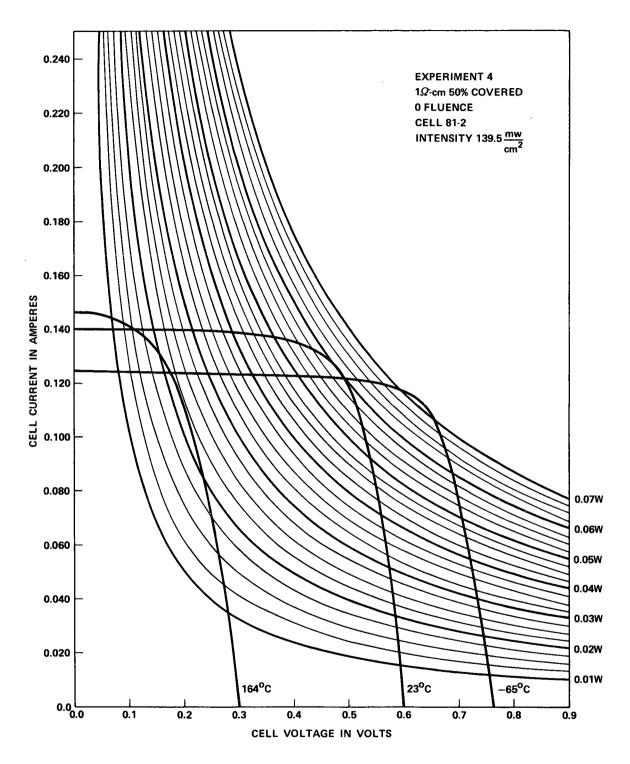


Figure 12

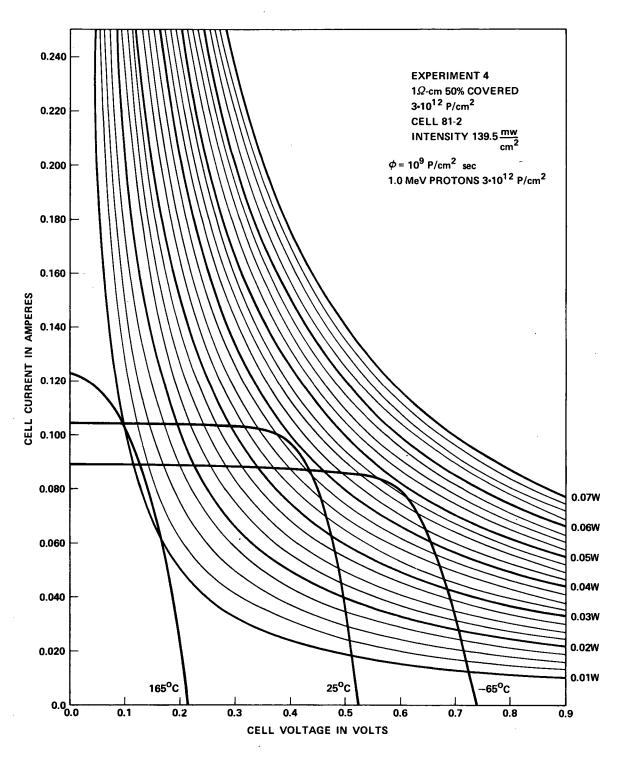


Figure 13

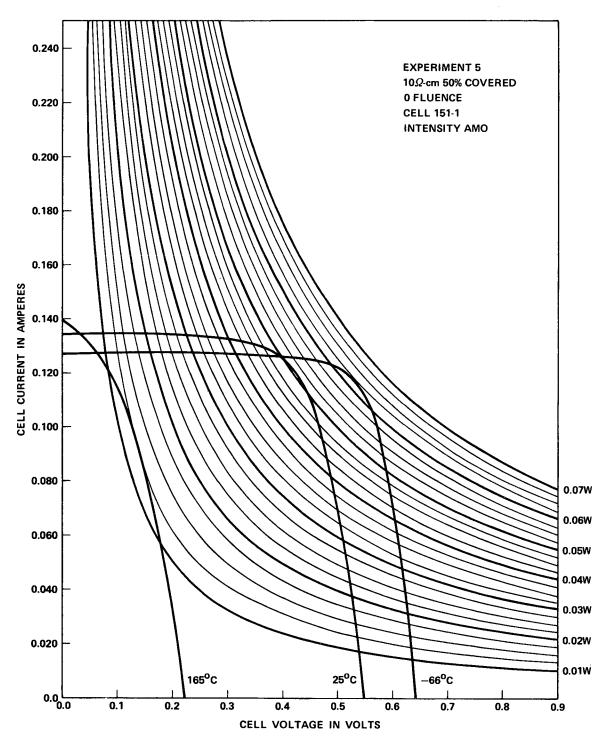


Figure 14

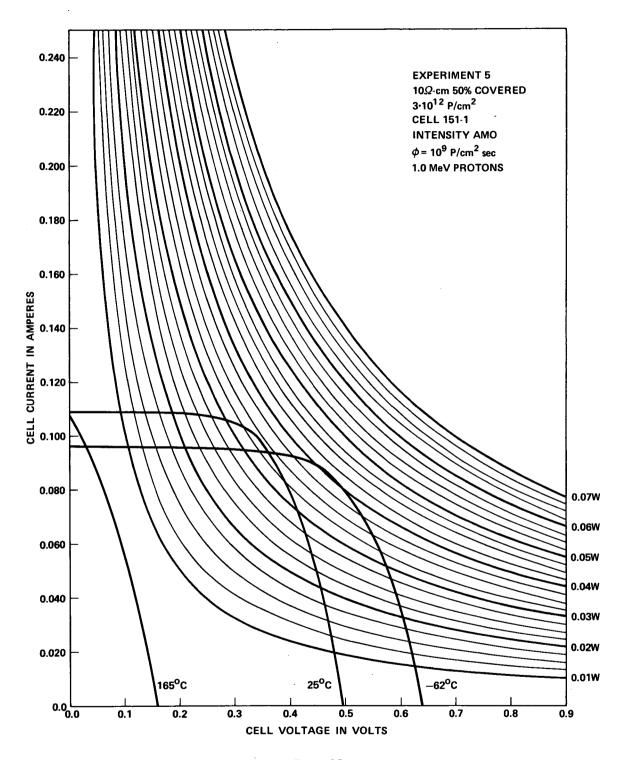


Figure 15

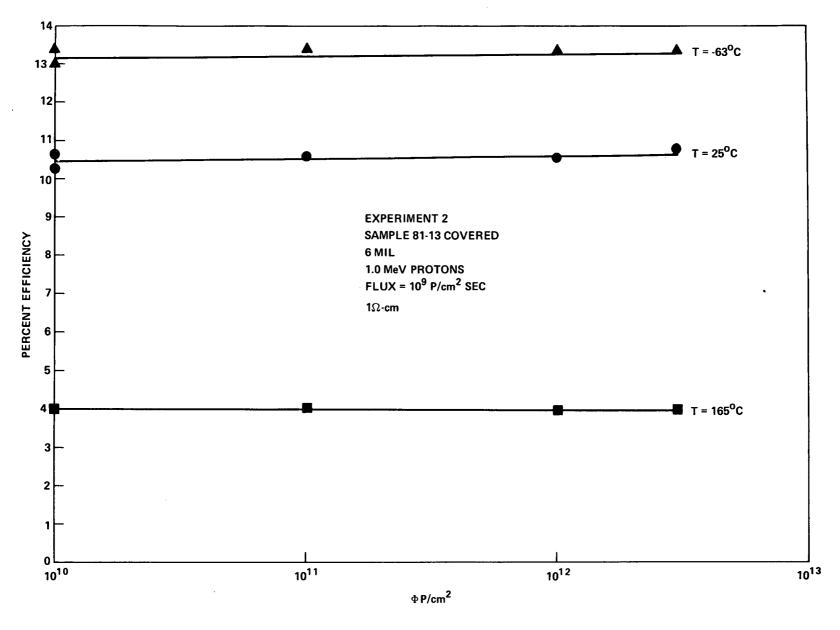


Figure 16

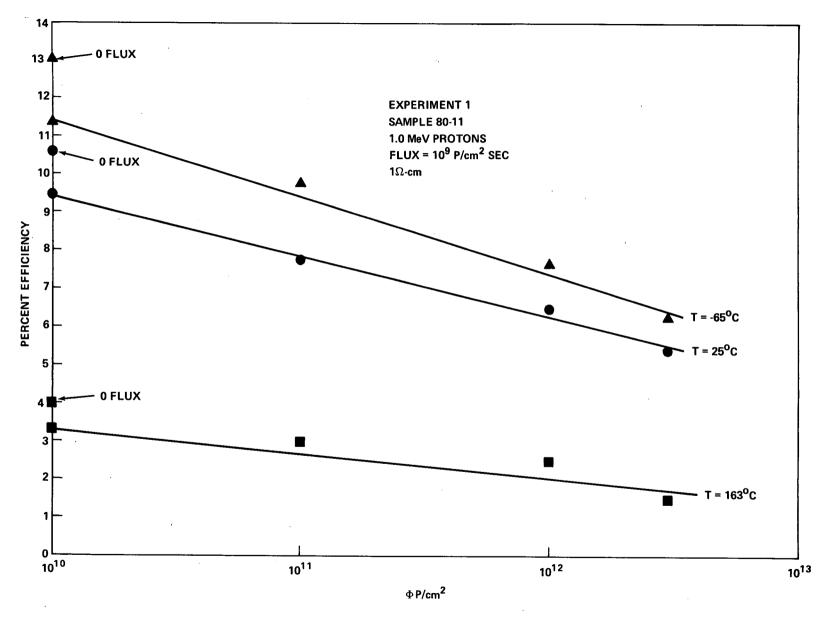


Figure 17

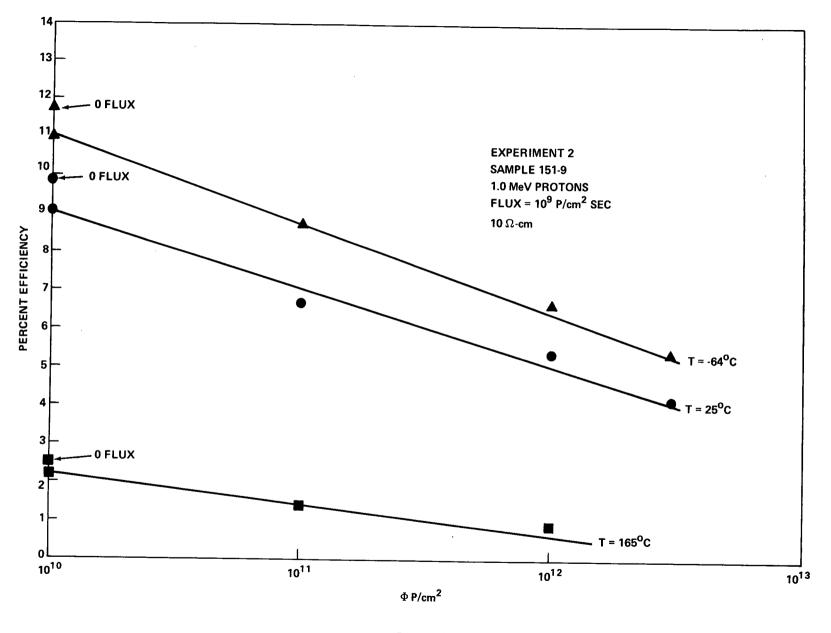


Figure 18

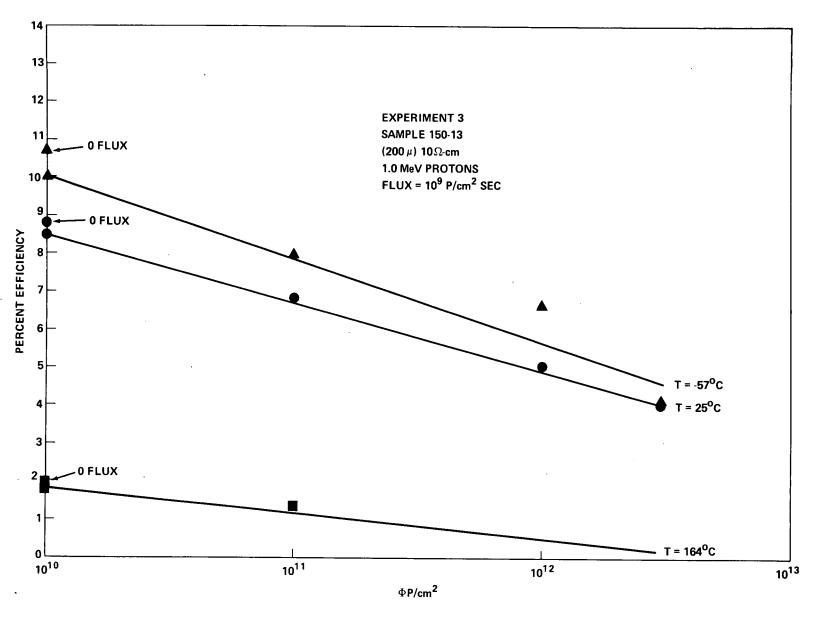


Figure 19



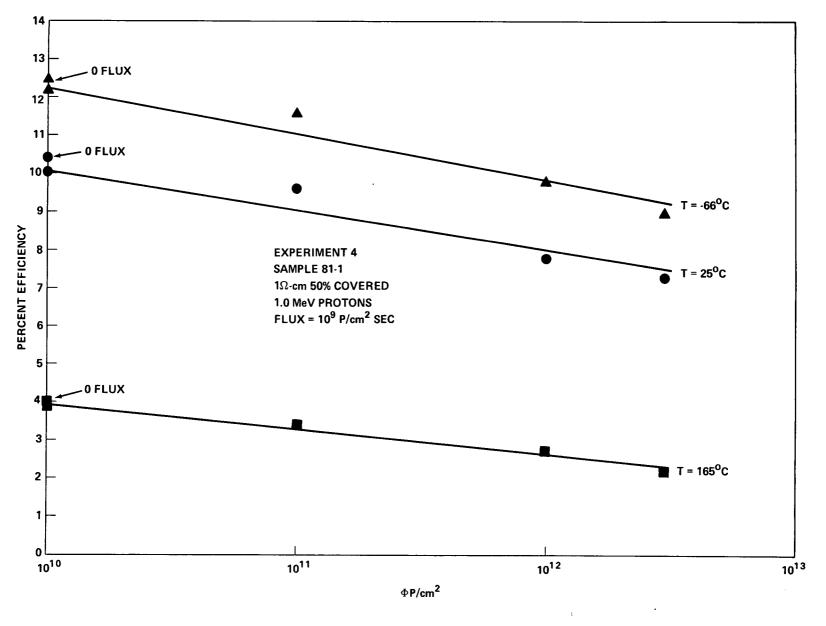


Figure 20



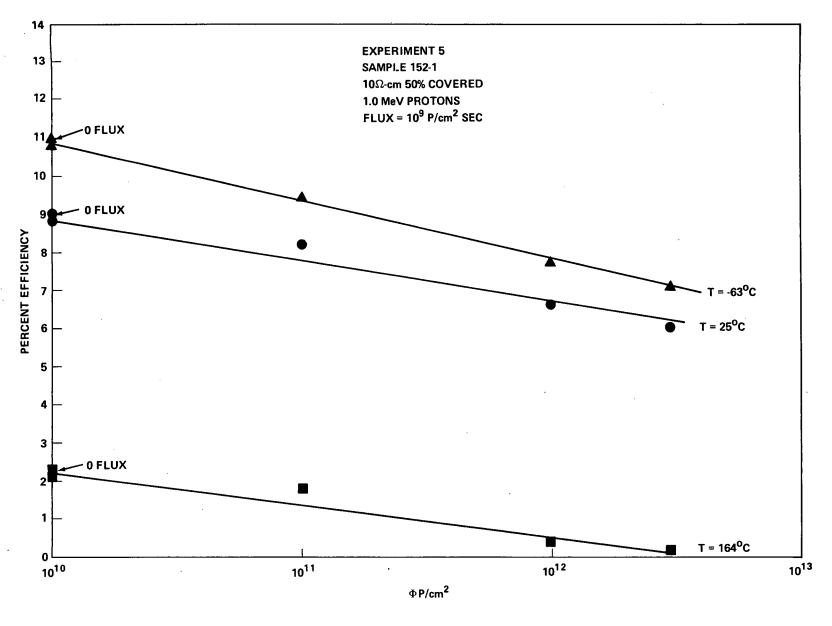


Figure 21

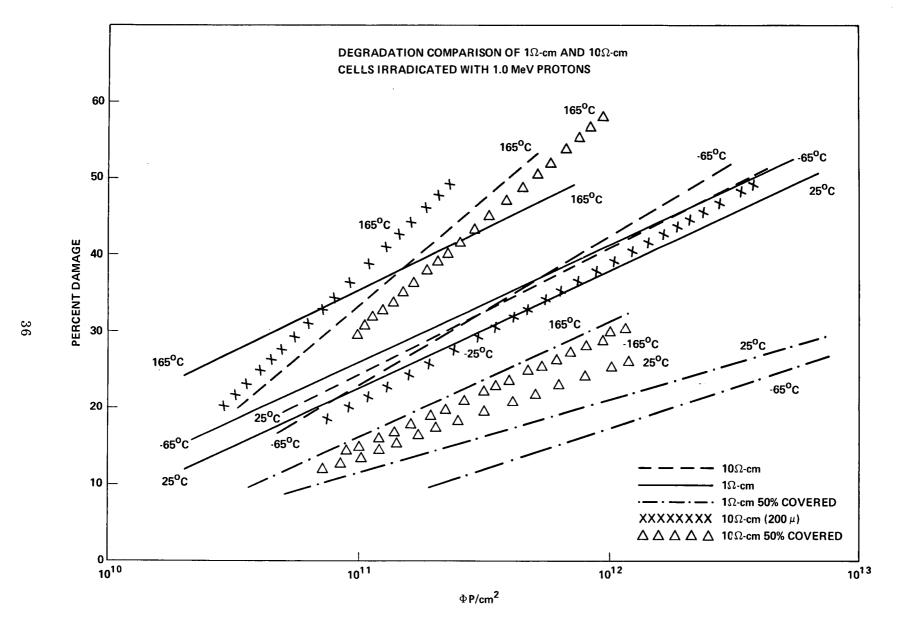


Figure 22

37

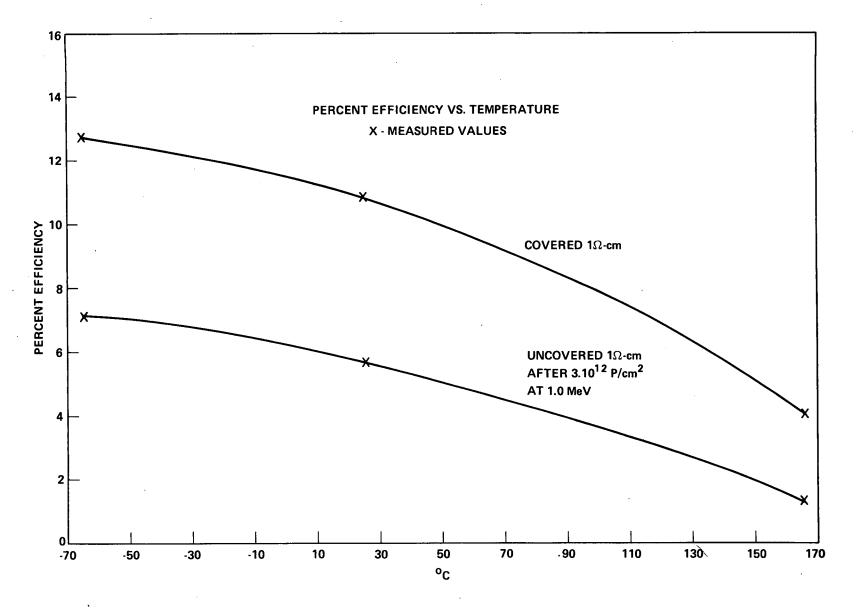


Figure 23